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AT A
GENERAL MEETING

OF THE

London Corresponding Society, K

Held on the GREEN, at CHALK FARM, on Monday
the 14th of April, 1794,

J. LOVETT IN THE CHAIR,

The following Letters were read:

TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SOCIETY OF THE
FRIENDS OF THE PEOPLE.

SIR,

AT a Crisis so important as the present there needs no Apology on the part of the "*London Corresponding Society*," for addressing itself to all other associated Societies, who have in view the same object as themselves.

To the "*Society of the Friends of the People*," arguments are not wanting to shew the importance and absolute Necessity of a full and fair Representation of the People of Great Britain. *They* have investigated the subject for themselves; *they* have exposed to the world a series of plain and indisputable facts, which must excite in the mind of every Man well-disposed to his Country, apprehensions of alarm for the security of the few remaining vestiges of Liberty, from which, as Britons, we derive consolation.

Deeply impressed with considerations of this nature, the London Corresponding Society earnestly solicits, at this time, the concurrence and assistance of the *Society of the Friends of the People*, in assembling, as speedily as the nature of the business will admit, a Convention of the Friends of Freedom, for the purpose of obtaining in a legal and constitutional method, a full and effectual representation.

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Our request is not made from the impressions of the moment, but after the maturest deliberations on the value and importance of the object for which we are contending, and of the difficulties we may expect from those whose present interests render them hostile to the welfare of their Country.

The opposition of such persons is no small argument for the goodness of our cause; and their late conduct when compared with their former professions, exhibits a depravity, unparalleled, we trust, on the page of history.

Under the auspices of apostate reformers, we have lately beheld serious and alarming encroachments on the Liberties of the People.

We have seen with indignation and horror men *legally* and *peaceably* assembled, dispersed by unconstitutional powers, and their papers seized.

We have seen some of our most virtuous brethren, whose only crime has been an imitation of Mr. PITT, and his associates, sentenced to fourteen years transportation, without the sanction of law or even of precedent, of which number, one was held up in the British Parliament as *convicted* and *condemned*, before he was even put upon his trial.

The insidious attempts also to introduce Foreign troops into this country, without the consent of Parliament, and the intended Bill to embody Foreigners into his Majesty's service, are measures sufficiently calculated to awaken our fears for the existence even of the name of Liberty. Nor can we overlook that part of the present system of corruption, which maintains out of the public plunder, a train of spies, more dangerous to society than so many assassins, whose avowed business is to destroy the friends of the country, one by one.

These are grievances which demand immediate redress, and when added to those evils which are necessarily connected with every *partial* Representation of the People, call for the strenuous exertions of every lover of his country.

But we are told that the present is not the time for Reform, and that innovation may introduce disturbance. Are those persons to judge of the proper time to make Reform, who exist only by corruption? Are the People of Britain to endure every thing without repining, without ardently seeking a radical Reform, because disturbances *may* happen? Have the enemies to Reform told us whence these disturbances are to originate?—Has a single overt act been committed by the friends to Freedom? Have not all the riots, all the public disturbances, all the seditious assemblies been excited by the enemies to Reform? And do they mean to tell us that they will still find other instruments

ments for their wicked designs; that they have yet those who will act over again the outrages that have been perpetrated in some parts of Britain; and attempted in others?

It such is the determination of those persons *hostile* to a *fair Representation*, let them look to the consequences, but let them recollect that it has happened, and may happen again, that those who kindled the flames have perished by them.

The friends to *Reform* are friends to *Peace*, their principles can be promoted only by peaceable means, they know of no other method of obtaining the object they desire. But they will not be alarmed by the threats of *venal apostates*, they will not draw back because they have seen some of their best friends doomed to exile. They will pursue the course in which they have begun, and turn neither to the right nor to the left.

Convinced as the London Corresponding Society is, that as there is no Power which *ought*, so there is no Power which *can* finally withstand the just and steady demands of a People resolved to be Free; they will therefore look with confidence to the *determination*, and they hope to the *co-operation of the "Society of the Friends of the People,"* in the attainment of an object which involves the dearest interests of society.

Convinced also that their intentions are of the purest kind, they will never stoop to answer the calumnies of their enemies; but will at all times, and in all circumstances, endeavour, by firmness and perseverance, to deserve the countenance and approbation of the best friends of their country, *the friends of a fair Representation of the People of Great Britain.*

I am, Sir,

For the London Corresponding Society,
THOMAS HARDY, Sec.

April 4, 1794.

COMMITTEE ROOMS.

FRITH-STREET, April 11, 1794.

SIR,

YOUR Letter of the 4th instant, addressed to Mr. SHERIDAN, Chairman of the FRIENDS OF THE PEOPLE, was laid before that SOCIETY at their Meeting on Saturday last; and they instructed their Committee to thank the LONDON CORRESPONDING SOCIETY for their communication, and to express the alarm they feel in common with every Friend of Liberty, at the late extraordinary proceedings of Government, so ably detailed, and so justly reprobated by your Society. They assure you that all the Friends of Reform, may "look with confidence to the determination and co-operation" of this Society in every peaceable and constitutional measure, which shall appear to them calculated to promote the object of their institu-

tion ; but they do not think that which is recommended in your letter, is likely to serve its professed purpose. They fear it will furnish the Enemies of Reform with the means of calumniating its Advocates, and so far from forwarding the cause, will deter many from countenancing that which they approve. For these reasons, the Friends of the People must decline to send Delegates to the Convention proposed by the London Corresponding Society:—At the same time, they renew their assurances of good-will, and desire of preserving a proper understanding and cordiality among all the Friends of Parliamentary Reform, notwithstanding any difference of opinion that may occur as to the best method of accomplishing it.

In Name, and by Order of the Committee,
(Signed) W. BRETON, Chairman.

To Mr. T. HARDY, Secretary to the
London Corresponding Society.

*The following RESOLUTIONS were then passed
Unanimously :*

Resolved Unanimously,

I. THAT this Society have beheld with rising indignation, proportioned to the enormity of the evil, the late rapid advances of despotism in Britain ; the invasion of public security ; the contempt of popular opinion ; and the violation of all those provisions of the Constitution intended to protect the People against the encroachments of Power and Prerogative.

II. That our abhorrence and detestation have been particularly called forth by the late arbitrary and flagitious proceedings of the Court of Justiciary in Scotland, where all the doctrines and practices of the *Star Chamber*, in the times of Charles the First, have been *revived* and *aggravated* ; and where sentences have been pronounced in open violation of all Law and Justice, which must strike deep into the heart of every man, the melancholy conviction that BRITONS ARE NO LONGER FREE.

III. That the whole Proceedings of the late British Convention of the People, at Edinburgh, are such as claim our approbation and applause.

IV. That the conduct of Citizens MARGAROT and GERALD in particular, by its strict conformity with our wishes and instructions, and the ability, firmness, and disinterested Patriotism which it so eminently displayed, has inspired an enthusiasm of Zeal and Attachment which no time can obliterate, and no persecution

cution remove; and that we will preserve their names engraven on our hearts till we have an opportunity to redress their wrongs.

V. That any attempt to violate those yet remaining Laws, which were intended for the Security of Englishmen against the Tyranny of Courts and Ministers, and the Corruption of dependent Judges, by vesting in such Judges a legislative or arbitrary Power, (such as has lately been exercised by the Court of Justiciary in Scotland) ought to be considered as dissolving entirely the social compact between the English Nation and their Governors; and driving them to an immediate appeal to that incontrovertible maxim of eternal Justice, *that the safety of the People is the SUPREME, and in cases of necessity, the ONLY Law.*

VI. That the arming and disciplining in this Country, either with or without the consent of Parliament, any Bands of *Emigrants and Foreigners, driven from their own Country for their known attachment to an INFAMOUS DESPOTISM*, is an outrageous attempt to *overawe and intimidate the free spirit of Britons*; to subjugate them to an army of *mercenary Cut-throats*, whose *views and interest* must of necessity be in direct opposition to those of the Nation, and that *no pretence whatever* OUGHT to induce the people to *submit to so unconstitutional a measure.*

VII. That the unconstitutional project of raising money and troops by forced benevolences (and no benevolences collected upon requisition from the King or his Ministers can ever in reality be voluntary) and the equally unjustifiable measure of arming one part of the People against the other, brought Charles the First to the block, and drove James the Second and his posterity from the Throne; and that consequently Ministers in advising such Measures, ought to consider whether they are not guilty of High Treason.

VIII. That this Society have beheld with considerable pleasure the *consistent respect* which the House of Lords displayed for their own Constitutional Rules and Orders, on the fourth of the present month, upon the motion of Earl Stanhope, concerning the interference of Ministers in the Internal Government of France; and that it is the firm conviction of this Society, that this circumstance when properly detailed, will have a considerable effect in convincing the country at large, of the true dignity and utility of that branch of HIS MAJESTY'S PARLIAMENT.

IX. That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to EARL STANHOPE, for his manly and patriotic conduct during the present Session of Parliament; a conduct which (unsupported as it has been in the Senate, of which HE is so truly honourable a Member) has, together with the timely interference of certain spirited

spirited and patriotic Associations, been nevertheless already productive of the salutary effect of chasing the Hessian and Hanoverian Mercenaries from our Coasts; who, but for these exertions might have been marched perhaps, ere this, into the very heart of the Country, together with others of their Countrymen, to have peopled the BARRACKS, which every where insult the Eyes of Britons.

X. That it is the firm conviction of this Society, that a steady perseverance in the same bold and energetic sentiments which have lately been avowed by the Friends of Freedom cannot fail of crowning with ultimate triumph, the virtuous Cause in which we are engaged, since whatever may be the interested Opinion of *Hereditary* Senators, or *packed* Majorities of *pretended* Representatives; Truth and Liberty in an age so enlightened as the present, must be Invincible and Omnipotent.

This Society having already addressed M. Margarot, their Delegate, an ADDRESS to JOSEPH GERALD was read as follows, and carried unanimously.

To JOSEPH GERALD, *a prisoner sentenced by the High Court of Justiciary of Scotland, to Transportation beyond the Seas for* FOURTEEN YEARS!

WE behold in you our beloved and respected friend and fellow-citizen, a Martyr to the Glorious Cause of Equal Representation, and we cannot permit you to leave this degraded country without expressing the infinite obligations the people at large, and we in particular, owe to you for your very spirited exertions in that cause upon every occasion; but upon none more conspicuously, than during the sitting of the BRITISH CONVENTION of the PEOPLE at Edinburgh, and the consequent proceeding (we will not call it *trial*) at the bar of the Court of Justiciary.

We know not which most deserves our admiration, the splendid talents with which you are so eminently distinguished; the exalted virtues by which they have been directed; the perseverance and undaunted firmness which you so nobly displayed in resisting the wrongs of your insulted and oppressed country; or your present manly and philosophical suffering under an *arbitrary*, and till of late *unprecedented* sentence: a sentence one of the most vindictive and cruel that has been pronounced since the days of
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that *most infamous* and *ever-to-be-detested* Court of Star Chamber, the enormous tyranny of which cost the first Charles his head.

To you and to your associates we feel ourselves most deeply indebted. For us it is that you are suffering the sentence of Transportation with felons, the vilest outcasts of Society! For us it is that you are doomed to the inhospitable shores of New Holland; where, however, we doubt not you will experience considerable alleviation by the remembrance of that VIRTUOUS CONDUCT for which it is imposed on you, and by the sincere regard and esteem of your Fellow Citizens.

The Equal Laws of this Country have, for ages past, been the boast of its inhabitants: But whither are they now fled? We are animated by the same sentiments, are daily repeating the same words, and committing the same actions for which you are thus infamously sentenced; and we will repeat and commit them until we have obtained redress; yet we are unpunished! either therefore the law is Unjust towards you in inflicting Punishment on the Exertions of *Virtue and Talents*, or it ought not to deprive us of *our share* in the GLORY of the *Martyrdom*.

We again, therefore, pledge ourselves to you and to our country, never to cease demanding our Rights from those who have usurped them, until having obtained an Equal Representation of the People, we shall be enabled to hail you once more with Triumph to your native country.—We wish you Health and Happiness; and be assured we never, *never* shall forget your Name, your Virtues, nor YOUR GREAT EXAMPLE.

The London Corresponding Society.

JOHN LOVETT, Chairman.

THOMAS HARDY, Secretary.

The 14th of April, 1794.

It was also unanimously resolved,

That the Committee of Correspondence be directed to convey the approbation of this Society—I. To Archibald Hamilton Rowan, prisoner in the Newgate of the city of Dublin, for his unshaken attachment to the people, and for his spirited assertion of their rights.

II. To John Philpot Curran for his admirable and energetic defence of A. H. Rowan, and the principles of Liberty, as well as for his patriotic conduct in Parliament.

III. To the Society of United Irishmen in Dublin, and to exhort them to persevere in their exertions to obtain justice for the people of Ireland.

IV. To

IV. To Skirving, Palmer and Muir, suffering the same iniquitous sentences, and in the same cause with our Delegates.

V. To John Clark, and Alexander Reid, for their so readily and disinterestedly giving bail for our Delegates, instigated there-to solely by their attachment to Liberty, uninfluenced by any personal consideration.

VI. To Adam Gillies, Malcolm Laing, and James Gibson, for their able assistance given to Joseph Gerald, at the bar of the High Court of Justiciary at Edinburgh.

VII. To felicitate Thomas Walker, of Manchester, and the people at large on the event of his, as well as several other late trials, and on the developement of the infamy of a system of Spies and Informers.

VIII. To Sir Joseph Mawbey, for his manly conduct at the late surreptitious Meeting held at Epsom in Surrey.

It was also unanimously Resolved,
That Two Hundred Thousand Copies of the Proceedings and Resolutions of this Meeting be printed and published.

J. LOVETT, Chairman.

T. HARDY, Secretary

Resolved,

That the thanks of this meeting be given to the Chairman, for his manly and impartial conduct this day.

T. HARDY, Secretary.

